

The Last of Linda

by Matt Pierard, Copyright 2019

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"You're reading her again, aren't you?" said Jack, glancing over at his wife on the sofa.

"Nothing like friendly competition," Linda said wryly, "Poor girl's dropped a notch."

"Hey, just because she's now writing for a rag co-founded by a neo-Nazi, a tabloid known for its various MeToo allegations, is no reason to belittle the lady's integrity. Doesn't that take a certain amount of cajones?"

"More like *chutzpah*," Linda muttered, flicking to the next page.

"Don't be catty, darlin'"

"*Reer*," she countered suggestively.

#

Dick Jackson pounded his fist on the desk. He had seen the intimate footage of Linda Miller and her husband.

"No, absolutely not! How dare you bring me this filth, Sol!"

"You wanted *everything* as I recall," Solomon Merlin said, spreading out his hands like a blossoming lotus.

"Not privacy invasion on a married couple! *Burn* this, *all* copies."

"Not my work, was sent me special delivery. Dude's got an axe to grind. *She* brings it out of guys. Look at that nigger Mitchell."

Jackson flinched at the slur but said nothing. Sol was in his 70's, had helped him well in the past. PCism was not in the old-timer's vocabulary.

#

"He said *what*?" Jack hobbled over to Linda. He was using a cane now to travel upright. A fortnight had passed.

Linda was brushing Monster's fur on the back porch now. She spoke in a burlesque of a Southern accent:

"'Motherhood brings out *such* a delightful *glow* in a woman.' I about hurled."

"And then he tried to touch you?"

"I had been in the bullpen talking with Sean, Cassie, and Amina. Sean was curious what it felt like and I let him touch my belly."

"*That* I can deal with," Jack said, scritching the cat's head. "No competition there."

"You consider Guy Acton IV competition? Please!"

"He made a pass at you."

"He's old enough to be my *grandfather*..."

"I hear them blue pills does wonders, ma'am," he drawled.

"*Ew!* Ew, ew, ew!! Anyway, I wouldn't let him cop a feel. He looked... hurt."

"Tough. It's enough that you get pawed by a gay Irishman."

"Bigot."

He reached around and felt her firm abdomen, then upwards. She sighed.

"Oh Jack, not in front of the cat--"

Her phone rang; the tone, *Beethoven's 5th*, was that of Ann Jones, her publisher's lawyer.

Jack groaned instinctively. He eased off. After a few minutes of earnest conversation sotto voce, Linda's scream may well have been heard in Los Angeles.

"Jesus, honey, what is it?"

Linda spun round and clung to him. "Someone is shopping a video of *us* m-making *love*, in *our* living room!"

"*What??!!*" he roared, about as loudly.

"This person... contacted Dick Jackson of all people. Jackson called Ann, she called me. Jackson is still angry with me but he found the video offensive and thought we should know about it. Oh Jack, what are we going to do?"

#

Sean Flaherty sat in a bar waiting on a date. He was 29, a little chubby, with curly black hair and what his mum called 'wise eyes'. The man in the hook-up profile photo entered, a broad-shouldered blond. He hailed him over; they shook hands, had a couple of beers. A half-hour later they were in Sean's bed. Barry West moaned appreciatively at Sean's oral attentions, that one aspect of his relationship with Jud that was sorely lacking. While perusing the ProfBear site -- which matched plus-size white-collar professional men up -- earlier in the week, he'd recognized the photo as the same one Sean used in his Twit profile. He had rolled his eyes then, and was doing so now for quite a different reason.

After he had returned the pleasure, the two lay back sated, Sean's head against Barry's muscular arm.

"That was great, thanks," Barry said. "It's been awhile..."

"Aye, you're no slouch yourself. You say you're seeing someone then?"

"Yeah. I care about him but... he just can't get the hang of giving head. Bisexual, black... it's complicated."

"I hear yuh." He rolled to his side, facing the man. "I guess this is a one-timer then?"

"Huh? No, no. I want to see you again, if you want. This really was great."

Sean slid his hand down through Barry's soft and curls.

"Aye, do yuh now?" he purred, following his hand.

#

A hot August night in Baltimore was the setting for a protest march by the Gallant Men. The group of mostly Aryan white, disaffected youth gathered in a mostly black neighborhood to "peacefully" stir up shit. Mixed into this crowd was a short, husky black with shaved head and shades who held up an anti-immigrant sign. As the Gallant Men leader for Baltimore stood up on a pedestal for that purpose to deliver his screed to a half-jeering crowd, the sign-holder said a prayer to himself and pulled a cord from beneath his jacket. A dozen sticks of dynamite and a couple of pounds of nails obliterated the man and at least a dozen people around him. The speaker was thrown backward and fatally impaled upon the spikes of the wrought-iron fence behind him. In all, 25 dead, 70 wounded.

#

Linda, restless, got up to pee and then checked her messages. The usual hate was filtered out by keyword (kike, dyke, feminazi, commie traitor) into a large file, leaving a more coherent collection of responses and so that mail from an unexpected source showed up loud and clear. She opened it to find a link to a reputable file-sharing site and the message:

"I figured I could trust you. This is the God's honest truth. I'm sorry I've hurt anyone innocent but this had to be done. God forgive me. Louis Dunn"

With trembling hand, Linda clicked the attached video. After viewing it, she robotically saved it to a data stick and returned it to a combination-locked box. Sighing deeply, she pulled up Fox News, her go-to for tragedy articles. Linda rarely let her emotions loose over worldly issues, but she wept so effusively now, that Jack came to her side to hold her.

"Louie Dunn is *dead*," she sobbed, "It's my fault, *my* fault!"

End
